Zoot Suit Worksheet

1. Describe the *stasis* in the play: where, when, who, what, etc. in a paragraph.

The play is set in the 1940’s in Los Angeles, California during WWII surrounding the sleepy lagoon murder case. Henry Reyna and some of his companions are charged for the murders. This leads to high tensions and eventual riots between the Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans.

2. What is the *intrusion*?

The intrusion is when Henry is arrested for murder by the LAPD.

3. What is the *unique factor*?

The unique factor is that Henry is just kind of picked for the murder to be pinned on him. The war going on around them has everyone at high tensions already and the community is eager to pin the murder on someone.

4. What is the *dramatic question* that should be answered by the end of the play?

Will Henry Reyna ever receive justice in a racist and tension fueled situation? Will the riots and tension between the Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans ever calm down?

5. Identify the most *theatrical moment* in the play and of what importance it seems to be.

The most theatrical moment was during the court trial. The prosecutor was very ruthless and it made it quite obvious his intensions of to pin the murder on the Mexican-American community. The prosecutor was screaming at the people he interrogated and was very forceful in an effort to make the people he was interviewing flustered.

6. List some of the *themes* of the play.

Racism, violence, injustice, oppression

7. What does Henry want? How does the playwright resolve his wants at the end of the play? How does this resolution compare with the real Henry, as indicated in the documentary?

Henry really wants to join the navy, however he can not because he now has a criminal background. The playwright resolves it by giving different alternatives to his fate. In real life, Henry became very depressed, became hooked on drugs, and died in a bar.

8. Note which version of the play in production you saw (either the DVD version or the HS stage version), then discuss the way the designers move from place to place (scene to scene) and how effectively that is for communicating the dramatic action.

I saw the HS stage version. The designers rely a lot on lightening to help the scene move from place to place by using a fade method. They also rely on a lot of dancing ad music to help carry the scenes out.

9. Choose a character from the play and discuss how the costume designer has accentuated (focused) the audience attention on that character. What are some of the details of the costume that strike you as interesting or exaggerated.

El Pachuco was wearing a very bright red, eye catching zoot suit. This is important because the suit needs to stand out against the other characters. The outfit is sharp and very defined.

10. Lighting plays a big role in the DVD and the staged version by the HS. Discuss the use of light to accentuate characters and scenes, choosing a particular scene from the production to discuss.

The most important thing I noticed about the lighting was that it was used to highlight major dialogue or important events. It was also used to help transition from scene to scene.